Women in Business and Technology

Transcript of Episode 030 - Amplifying inclusion at Microsoft Ignite with Startup Technical Advisor Claudia Galván
Guest: Shona Chee, Claudia Galván

Summary: Our hosts are in Orlando, FL at Microsoft Ignite, a conference where IT pros are skilling up. Sonia interviews Microsoft Diversity & Tech Community Lead Shona Chee about the onsite activations promoting inclusion. Colleen interviews Silicon Valley startup Technical Advisor Claudia Galván about her commitment to getting more women into STEM.

Find audio and more information at Microsoft.com/WIBT

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Welcome to Episode 30 of Women in Business and Technology. I'm Colleen O'Brien.

SONIA DARA: And I'm Sonia Dara. Oh my God, I can't believe this is 30.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: I know. We're recording from the Microsoft Ignite Expo floor in Orlando, Florida where thousands of IT pros have converged to see the latest tech offerings, to build their networks, and to skill up on everything from AI to accessibility.

SONIA DARA: Yup, and I've been here since Saturday helping support all of our service commercial marketing presence here at Ignite. So, in addition to staffing our booth at the Expo and connecting with all these IT pros, I've also been helping out with all of our breakout sessions.

And also, we had this awesome keynote demo with the Surface Hub 2, the first public premier of it, and it went really, really well and we were super, super stoked.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah. There's been a lot of buzz about that demo. And in addition to these amazing demos, there have been some really milestone announcements this week.

In Satya Nadella's keynote presentation on Monday, he kicked off this initiative called AI for Humanitarian Action. It's a five year, $40 million project that will focus on helping the world recover from disasters, addressing the needs of children, protecting refugees and displaced people, and promoting respect for human rights. So, that was a huge investment and amazing announcement for the company this week.

SONIA DARA: Yup. And another pretty monumental announcement in Satya's keynote was made jointly with SAP and Adobe, a commitment to helping customers do more with their own data.

The Open Data Initiative is essentially getting multiple business applications to use a common data model to keep data compatible across those applications. If you've ever worked on a project that require you to measure data from different channels -- web, social, in-app -- you know the pain of siloed data. It was cool to see this commitment and the invitation for other businesses to join the initiative.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Our longer-term listeners may remember that we recorded from Ignite onsite last year as well, and the strong focus on programming around Women in Business and Technology, the name of our podcast (laughter). This year, the focus on inclusion is still incredibly present here at Ignite, but under a new diversity and tech umbrella.

SONIA DARA: In our Community Connects segment, I spoke with Diversity & Tech Community Lead, Shona Chee, about planning for that track and how the program came to life here at Microsoft Ignite.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And then, we'll jump into an interview that I had with the truly phenomenal Claudia Galván right here at the Expo. Claudia has previously led Global Product Development at Oracle, Adobe, and Microsoft. And she's currently a Technical Advisor working with early stage startups in Silicon Valley.

And in her spare time (laughter), which she doesn't actually have much of, she's pursuing her PhD at Drexel University where she's researching strategies to increase the pipeline of women in STEM. In other words, I am the President of Claudia Galván's fan club. (Laughter.)

SONIA DARA: Yeah, like ultimate role model, total boss. (Laughter.) So yeah, listeners, we're in the middle of the Expo floor, and there are so many demos to see and so much swag to collect. So, let's get the show rolling.

(Music.)

SONIA DARA: I'm joined by Microsoft 365 Product Marketing Manager and Diversity & Tech Community Lead, Shona Chee. Shona, thank you for joining us.

SHONA CHEE: Yeah, nice to meet you.

SONIA DARA: So Shona, Microsoft Ignite is a huge milestone for you and your team. What are you activating here in Orlando?

SHONA CHEE: Yeah, so we're really excited to kick off a new diversity and tech track. This year, we have over 35 sessions just focused on all areas of diversity inclusion -- not only gender, but also LGBTQ. We have cultural identities, we have race and culture.

So, accessibility is also a big part of it. When we talk about inclusive design, we really try to build all of that in. So, this is what we try to do over here is to provide a safe and welcoming platform for people to feel like they have a place they belong to. They can share their opinions and perspectives and just bring their whole selves to the conference.

SONIA DARA: That's awesome. So, it sounds like there's a track. So, there's actually 35 sessions. There's a lounge, I heard. What are the other aspects people can get involved with?

SHONA CHEE: There is. Yeah. So, the lounge is a big part of it. We have a new thing that we're launching this year called the Idea Swap Lounge, and we have two things that we're doing there. So, we have one-on-one idea swaps, which is a tool where you can schedule a 45-minute session with anyone in the attendee directory and just talk about anything from career, culture, community.

So, we want people to make use of this experience and just being here in Orlando to meet up with people, right? Because all sessions are live stream and recorded, so the biggest value of being here is really connecting with people. And that's really what we wanted to do.

And for the group idea swap, what we want to do with that is to create a platform where people can lead sessions. Whether they're attendees, they want to drive topics around technology, or about culture. So, that is their tool and their platform to run it completely. And we just open it up to everybody and sign up. So, we're really excited about that.

SONIA DARA: So listeners, we're here in a conference room out of the Orange County Convention Center where an amazing panel just happened -- Voices from the Top: Leaders get real about building inclusive work cultures. The panel featured former guests of our show, Scott Hanselman, and Chief Accessibility Officer, Jenny Lay-Flurrie, and more.

So Shona, what is something that you learned from the panelists today?

SHONA CHEE: I think we really benefitted from having them share their perspective as leaders. As you know, all of the leaders on stage today came from very different background. We had Joy Shake (ph) and Tara, who pretty much grew up in the company, right? Joy started as an intern, and now she's a CVP. We had Sophia, who joined from Apple and Google, and now provides an outside-in perspective.

So, I think we really wanted to capture the diversity of our leaders as well, and to have them share their background. So, that's what I really learned about kind of having them there just to provide a new perspective.

SONIA DARA: So, what goals did you have in mind when you were putting together this entire diversity and tech program track? What does success look like for you?

SHONA CHEE: I think we want to make sure that we represent the full spectrum of diversity inclusion. So, it goes beyond just one dimension, right? We talk about intersectionalities of identity. So for us, we could be a woman in tech; we could be a person of color; we could be an engineer or a marketer.

So, we had many identities that we grapple with. And I think just creating this platform where you feel like you can bring all of yourself together and feel accepted, I think that's really our goal.

SONIA DARA: What is your vision for the future of this program?

SHONA CHEE: This year, we really wanted it to be front and center. And this is why you'll find the lounge in the Immersion Zone, like, right next to community. It's the first thing you see when you walk in. And I think that is really in line with our vision of bringing it out to everybody, not being in a closed space.

I think we've moved on from wanting little, private spaces where people just huddle in a room and talk, to really taking the uncomfortable conversations out there. We need to talk about difficult and hard topics just so that we can learn, right? Instead of just skirting around issues, and just touching at the surface, we really want to dig into it. And even if it makes us uncomfortable, we will emerge from it so much better and learn a lot from it.

SONIA DARA: So, where can our listeners who might not be attending Ignite in person learn more?

SHONA CHEE: If you want to engage with us after Ignite, we also have an online community that lists on Tech Community. So, just go to ak.ms/diversity&tech.

SONIA DARA: Thank you so much, Shona. Congrats.

SHONA CHEE: That's great. Thanks for having me.

SONIA DARA: All right, listeners, let's get on with the interview.

(Music)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: I'm thrilled to welcome to the show Claudia Galván. Claudia has led Global Product Development at Oracle, Adobe and Microsoft, reaching billions around the world (laughter). And the last few years, she's focused on providing strategic and technical expertise to startups in Silicon Valley to launch products internationally.

Claudia, welcome to the show.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Thank you, Colleen. I'm very excited to be here.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: What brings you to Microsoft Ignite this week?

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Well, I am very passionate about diversity in tech. Being a woman in tech for many, many years, I have been invited to speak about diversity in tech this time. And being the first time in this conference, I am just so excited. I have been able to meet people from all over the world, exchange ideas about what it means to them to work in a diverse and a non-diverse environment. And yeah, this is why I'm here, just to basically amplify the message.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Right. Yeah, there's an entire program here dedicated to diversity in tech, and I've seen your name on quite a few of the panels this week. So, it's been great to hear from you.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Thank you. I'm very excited.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: So, you're currently working as an early stage, innovation, Technical Advisor in the Bay Area. Can you share a bit more about your work and the role that you play in partnership with startups?

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Yes, thank you. I've been working with startups now for a few years. I'm focusing on early stage. What that means is less than $4 million. And I get engaged initially through different accelerator programs where, basically, people want to start their own companies and they have these big ideas. Then, I help them prototypes those ideas. I help them set up the strategy so that they can basically present them to the VCs.

And then, once they get some traction, I basically help them with their international strategy. That is my core competency. Then, I basically work with them across the different functional areas with all the different functional leaders and the CEO on basically setting up exactly what needs to happen, like a roadmap, in order for them to basically enable their products, that it works in all different languages and markets.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: You know, after building such a big career in these large corporations, it's interesting to pivot to early stage startups. What motivated you to make that pivot in your career?

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Yes, I think it was all about location, location, location. (Laughter.) Being in Silicon Valley for so long and working for big companies, you hear all the buzz about startups. And it wasn't easy to get into the startups because this is a separate community. Then I didn't really have a network in the startup community. All my networks were in big companies.

When I started just to explore that possibility just attending different events, participating hands-on in many hack-a-thons, just playing different roles and slowly just getting to know people in that industry. And soon, I discovered that many of them are very early in their career, and I'm much later in my career, and that I could bring a different perspective. I could basically help them during the process.

Thanks to Microsoft, I basically acquired so many different skills in my role. I had to work with 16 different divisions working on so many different technologies, right? And then, I have been able basically to bring this expertise to these smaller companies. And that has worked out really well.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah. It sounds like you were really starting from scratch -- you know, having to go to hack-a-thons, and networking events. As someone who had already built such a big career, it sounds almost rather humbling to have to start all over again.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: It sounds like that, but at the same time, my first opportunity to go to a startup was actually offered by a colleague of mine who was a peer at Adobe. And he had seen my work. When the time came to build his international team, he gave me a call. And going from managing, indirectly, hundreds of people at Microsoft, and then going to basically a much more smaller company -- 200 people -- it was definitely a humbling experience.

Then, once I transitioned to that, as I said, I didn't really know a lot of people. I had to build my network. And that's the way that I thought that would work, and actually it worked out really well.

And as a result, I basically built a number of partnerships with different accelerators. And then, now the accelerators invite me to be a mentor, to participate, to coach, to present. And with these opportunities, this is how I first engage with these companies.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: It sounds like you were so intentional about that brand pivot, and starting to network with those accelerators. And you mention that that initial startup role was getting tapped for your expertise in internationalization. I know that you had

previous experience expanding products internationally at both Hightail, which was formerly You Send It, and Microsoft.

And I see the value in this skillset as technology has become more ubiquitous, and as companies aim to be more inclusive about their products, internationalization is a highly valuable skill. What are some of the principles that you keep in mind when developing an internationalization strategy?

CLAUDIA GALVAN: All right. It all depends on where the company is at in their development process. Then, we have to evaluate what is the product or products, and where do they want to go and expand their market. There is a lot of market opportunities.

And depending on what the product is, who are the customers, then I basically sit down with the CEO. I discuss his vision, or her vision. And based on that, I dive into the product to better understand what their offerings are. And based on that, and doing a lot of customer research, I come back to the leadership team and I present what my findings are.

And in general, I try to set up a roadmap where they basically start very small, developing a very small what is called minimum viable product that will work with maybe English and one more language. And then, with that, we basically go through the learning process about what needs to happen and how much effort needs to happen.

And once we have this working prototype that basically works in at least two languages, then we can basically go and start to look through different milestones. And maybe the next milestone is to increase the number of languages to five languages and 15 markets. And then, we go to the next milestone in the roadmap where we basically increment maybe to 10 or 15, and we just keep scaling that way, just taking incremental steps along the way. That's basically what I try to work with, the functional leaders and the engineering team, and actually, all the different teams.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: A slow and steady incremental rollout?

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Yes.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: So, maybe I already know the answer to this, but is there a wrong way to do internationalization?

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Well, yes, I think the wrong way is when you don't think about internationalization from day one. And many companies are so focused on just basically putting something out the door that they forget that if you don't go and enable the software from the very beginning, then you're going to pay later.

I know of very well-known companies that basically they didn't think of it from the very beginning, and then took probably a couple of years to implement later because retrofitting the software is very costly, right? And then, you want to keep adding features, and you don't want internationalization to be a distraction. You basically want something, I always say, that has to be part of the company DNA from day one, right?

And people don't know. It's not their fault. They don't really know that you need to do some specific and intentional steps at the very beginning, and not only on the product because the product is a big part of the internationalization strategy, but you also have to think about all the different functional areas.

For example, finance. If you're going to do international payments, right? If you're going to have legal, they need to be worried about all the regulations around the world. Customer support, how are you going to support your international customers? You're going to think about marketing, what is the specific message and how we're going to translate or localize this message around the world. How are we going to do the pricing, right, and operations? Where are your data centers going to be located? And so on.

You basically have to be thinking of your international strategy in a very broad way so that you can take the necessary steps, or at least start thinking about it from the very beginning.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: This is a theme that we encounter fairly often. I just went to a session with Jenny Lay-Flurrie, who's our Chief Accessibility Officer, and she mentioned sort of the same thing, that accessibility cannot be a bolt-on at the end. You need to be building products from day on with accessibility in mind.

And your anecdote reminds me of this conversation that I had with Dan Shapiro, who talked about building his company, Gloforge, with three white male founders, and having retroactively to build diversity and inclusion into the culture of his organization, and how starting that company and growing that company was digging himself out of a hole. And his message was, "Always consider diversity and inclusion from the get go of what you're starting."

So, these are great tips for all of our entrepreneurial and intra-preneurial listeners. Keep these things in mind when you're starting something. Don't bolt them on at the end.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Thank you. And you know, just building upon your idea, as internationalization has to be part of the DNA from day one, so diversity has to be part of the DNA from day one, right? And I know there's a lot of challenges right now. And you know, you just have to be patient and just try different things, and get engaged with the right people -- network with the right people, right? (Laughter.) And it will work out.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yes. So, along those lines of diversity in tech, prior to your technical advising work, you were the Senior Director of ABI Local with the Anita Borg Institute for Women and Technology. What drew you to that organization? (Laughter.)

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Actually, the project I was working on is called ABI.Local.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Got it.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: And basically, I have been involved with Anita Borg for about 15 years. I've been attending the Grace Hopper conferences for a long, long time. I'm part of a couple of communities called Systers, and then, the other community is called Latinas in Computing. Most of them are women in tech and computer science, and these communities have been an incredible support system for me. And attending the Grace Hopper conference every year, it was like going to mecca. It's like a dream, a lifelong dream.

And through attending the conferences, I was able to get to know Telle Whitney, who was the CEO of Anita Borg. And knowing my passion for women and increasing diversity, as well as my experience launching products internationally, she thought that I would be a good fit for the organization. And basically ABI.Local is all about expanding the message that you get at the Grace Hooper conference, but doing it globally.

And it was a fantastic experience. I was able to work on that project, get to help them, just setting up the initial framework. And now, ABI.Local is growing all over the place. Yeah, super great experience.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah, it's great because the Grace Hopper conference comes but once a year, and only so many people can go. So, I really appreciate these locate events that Anita Borg Institute is investing in because it means that more people can have access to those messages.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Yes. And I do want to add that I'm also very involved with the Society of Women Engineers. I have been an officer for many years, and I'm currently helping with all the diversity and inclusion efforts there, as well. Those are two of the biggest organizations that are supporting women in tech right now.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Right. I actually think that you have an award from the Society of Women Engineers, the Star award. And frankly, Claudia, when I was scrolling through your resume, I saw that you're mentoring with all of these different organizations. What role has mentorship played in your life that you are so adamant and passionate about giving back in this way?

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Thank you for asking this question. I feel incredibly fortunate to have had a very solid career in Silicon Valley. And I haven't done it all alone. It wasn't a hero's journey. At the beginning, when I first came to the United States, I really didn't know a lot of people. And I basically had to slowly build relationships, and there were so many people that helped me along the way, you know, just giving me advice -- men and women.

And I was also part of an executive program that Adobe sent me to that was for women leaders that were going to be on the track for Director or above. And this program is called WOMEN Unlimited. And before that, I was very introverted. I didn't present as much. I didn't have a huge network.

But this program taught me the importance of mentorship. There, I had a group of mentors who were basically giving me candid advice and guidance about what to do next, right? Because we all don't know how to navigate these careers. We're all basically learning in the job as we go along.

Then, as I was able to progress in my career, you start to look around and you see that there's people that have the same struggles that I had before when I was early in my career. And I just have this humongous passion for helping other women, helping everybody that I can think of.

But let me tell you a very fun story. When I first came to the United States, because I didn't know many people, one of the things I started to do was to volunteer in many different organizations -- random. I mean, I was, like, directing traffic for the parking lot. I was doing face painting. I was doing boys and girls clubs.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Getting involved.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Just getting involved everywhere. And then, they're like, "Claudia," I was everywhere. And I went, "Okay, I have to focus on something," and this is part of the executive program that I went. It's like, "Great that you want to make a difference, but you basically have to choose your battles. You cannot just go and volunteer everywhere."

Then, I had been very intentional in the last over 15 years just to basically focus on women. I focus also on minorities. Then, that had been my number one priority now.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: I love it. I love that you've invested so much time and passion here.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Other people have done this for me. Then, it's like a pay forward, yes.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Right, right. And you've mentioned coming to the U.S. When you think back to your childhood, did you picture having such an impactful career and having such a wave of impact through your mentorship? Did you imagine that you'd be where you are today?

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Oh, absolutely not. (Laughter.) I didn't even know I was going to be outside of the United States, right? But you probably know, I also lived in Canada, and then I'm here now. And I have been able to travel all over the world as well because of my job. Then, I really didn't foresee this.

Growing up, my family are all economists -- my mom, my dad, my uncle, my grandmother. Then, I thought I would be an economist. And until I was a senior in high school that I took economics, and then I realized that that wasn't going to be my calling. I found myself trying to figure out what I was going to do next.

And there was a career day, and there are the people that come -- the doctor, the dentist -- and now I realize how important is that, because there was a software engineer who came and he talked about what he did. And as soon as he explained what a software engineer did -- I didn't know a software engineer even existed, right? -- and I was like, "That's what I was to do."

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Wow, then and there.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: That was a pivotal moment in my life. This is another reason why I go to schools and I basically talk to girls about the career in engineering, because it was somebody who took the time out of their day to come and talk to my school. And you know, thanks to that, I was able to discover that that's what I wanted to do, right?

I have to tell you, it wasn't easy to go through computer science because, as I mention, I was already thinking I was going to go and take economics. Then, that meant I had not taken any of the classes needed for computer science in high school, and I was already a senior. But I was a very good student. I had like a 4.0 GPA (laughter).

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: I would imagine. (Laughter.)

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Yes, I'm a little bit driven. (Laughter.) Anyway, when I first applied, I didn't even occur to me that they were not going to accept me. I only applied to one school, and I didn't even have the background. Then, when I went to check the acceptance list, I wasn't on the acceptance list; I was on the pending list. Then, I had to talk to the Dean and convince him to let me into the program. And he says, "You don't have any of the background." And it's like, "No, I can do it. I can do it."

And when I went to my first class, it's like as if I had moved to China. I mean, literally, I could not understand. Imagine I'm sitting in a calculus class, and I'd never taken any of

the prerequisites for calculus. Then, I basically got myself into the library and started from Algebra 1 to try to figure out how things worked, right? And I spent hundreds and hundreds of hours trying to catch up. And it took a lot of effort, but at the end of the day, I did graduate first in my class. (Laughter.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: (Laughter.) Oh my gosh, wow.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Did I mention I'm a little bit competitive? (Laughter.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And to think, all of this started because someone came to your classroom and talked to you about their job. That is quite a story.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Yes. I invite everybody to do that because, without knowing it, you can be a role model and an example for a lot of people. You can make a difference. I think it would not have been even a thought about going into that career.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: I think about this so often, how growing up, ire ally wanted to be maybe a hair dresser, or for some reason, a marine biologist. How did I even know what that job was? But yeah, there are a lot of programs that Sonia and I have researched and featured on the show that do this very thing of getting more women in technology into classrooms to talk to young girls about their jobs. And that work is so incredibly impactful, and we're so proud to highlight it.

So, as you mentioned it, you have a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, a Master of Science in Program and Project Management, and you're currently in pursuit of your Doctorate of Education at Drexel University, where you're researching strategies to increase the pipeline of women in STEM.

You are truly a lifelong learner. (Laughter.) How have you charted your educational path, and what were the milestones in life when you decided that it was time to go back into the classroom for that Masters, and then subsequently, your PhD?

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Yes, thank you. When I came to the United States, I came as a Lead of a product, and soon I was promoted to Manager. And I really didn't know what I was doing.

Then, the first thing that I thought that I needed to do was to go and take classes. And I did enroll into an MBA program. But as I mentioned, this is before I went to the executive program. I wasn't really comfortable speaking in public. Maybe I would have done very small presentations at work, but that was it.

My first class in the MBA program was, basically, I was surrounded by Vice President and Directors. And I was this tiny little Lead of a project that nobody knew. And I didn't

feel that that's what I wanted to do. I basically switched to program and project management, and this is before it became very popular.

And it was one of the best things that I did because it basically allowed me to manage the projects, transition into my managerial role, and get the information and education that I needed at that point. And it wasn't easy, either, going from stopping for a number of years after your Bachelor's, and then going back to school. That is always a huge learning curve. Then, I really enjoyed that process.

And then, I continued with my career and it was a little bit of an accident, going into the Doctorate degree, but a little bit intentional as well. As I mentioned, I have been very lucky about growing my career into senior levels in the organization. And when you look around and you see that, basically, all the women have left the building, you're the last women standing, you're like, "Okay, what is different about me versus everybody else? What is my experience? Is my experience unique?" because I'm very analytical. I wanted to learn more about it, and I needed a methodology.

That was in the back of my head when, one time, I was at Stanford and I had gone to a conference. And there was this tiny little sign that said, "Graduate Fair, that way." And I still had time in the parking. Then I'm like, "Okay, I'm going to go and check it out." Then, I go to the Graduate Fair and there's all these schools from all over the world that were basically trying to get in a Doctorate program. And I was like, "Okay, this is amazing. I have to do this."

And I was lucky enough to talk to Drexel. They were very welcoming, and you know, I didn't make the decision right away. It took me time to decide to enroll into the program. And it is, again, not easy. This is one of the most difficult things I've ever done. I commuted for three years to Sacramento because they don't have a local campus in Silicon Valley. But I got to meet amazing people over there.

And right now, I am in the process. I'm in Chapter 5 of my dissertation.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Congratulations.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Thank you. Then, I finish the research. You know, it's always life happens. Then, it is a little challenging to try to finish the last chapter, but that's my goal for this year. And then, I'll move forward.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah. Well, we're all looking forward to reading your finished and published dissertation. But is there anything that you can share that's been particularly insightful from your research, from pulling it together? What have you found that is surprising to you in this space?

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Well, there is a lot of things that are surprising. Number one is that the experiences for every woman who is in tech are different, and not all of them are negative. There's a lot of very positive experiences for many women. I think that there is an opportunity to share those positive stories more.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: I love that. Yeah, we talk so much about imposter syndrome that it becomes the title of every women in tech presentation. And instead, I'm like, "Where is the Great Parts of Working in Tech presentation that we should be giving instead?" Yeah.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Yes. And definitely, I think that a lot of both men and women who are in tech, you know we love technology. It's a huge part of who we are. And I don't think those stories get told enough.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: So many of the programs that I've witnessed around diversity in tech and women in tech are largely fueled by individuals' experiences. And while I think all of those stories are valid, I also really appreciate that you are leaning into the numbers. I'm also an incredibly analytical person, and to know that this type of research is getting tested, and has the proper scrutiny to maybe identify paths forward, that is really hopeful to me.

So, thank you for making that commitment, for making that drive down to Sacramento. (Laughter.)

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Thank you. (Laughter.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Claudia, in 2013, you were issued a patent on software user interface human language translation. The Institute for Women's Policy Research reported that more than 81 percent of patents include no women inventors, and that women aren't expected to reach parity in patenting until 2092. I'd love to hear your perspective with your PhD experience in mind about whether or not this is an important statistic to focus on, and if we should put resources behind moving the needle there.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Yes, and yes. (Laughter.) It's so interesting that you brought this up. One of the things that I've been doing lately is basically encouraging women to be more innovative. Many of them, because of the imposter syndrome, they feel that they are not innovative. Or maybe, they don't feel that their ideas are heard, or they can move them forward.

And I have been focusing on empowering that conversation, and hopefully, that will open more doors. A date of 2092 sounds like a long time (laughter), sounds like a long time. I do have to say that if you have an idea, get yourself with a group of people that are going to be able to help you drive that idea forward. It is so important. It is not a hero's journey; it is a team effort.

When I was hired first into Adobe, we were doing everything manually. I mean, literally. It was very, very labor intensive. Then, I started with a very small group, just three of us. We were doing everything, and we started to think about how to make these scalable, right?

And as we brainstormed, we came up with this idea that now, to this day, is basically implemented everywhere. And I always feel very proud that companies like Apple and Google are referencing my patent (laughter) because it's just so exciting, right, because it was pivotal time.

And finding a patent takes a lot of effort. You have to spend a lot of time talking to the lawyers. And it turns out at the end of the day, the language that is used is very different from your everyday language. But at the end of the day, it's really exciting to have a patent published. And I wish I had more time to do that. Maybe when I finish my dissertation, I can go and apply for more patents. (Laughter.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah, you're going to have so much extra time to just filter a new commitment in. (Laughter.)

CLAUDIA GALVAN: (Laughter.) Exactly, yes.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Claudia, this has been such an amazing conversation. I'm feeling truly inspired, and I'm sure our listeners will be inspired as well. Where can they find you on the Internet to keep learning more about your work?

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Great. Well, first of course, LinkedIn. You can find me also on Facebook. I try to keep both social networks a little bit different, but in these days, it's kind of difficult. Everything is mixed in. Then, just come find me there. That's the easiest way.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah, you're brining your whole self to all of your social networks.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Yes. And I'm also on Twitter.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Excellent. What's your Twitter handle?

CLAUDIA GALVAN: C Galván. C like Charlie, and then G-A-L, V like Victor, A-N.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Claudia, thank you so much for joining us today.

CLAUDIA GALVAN: Thank you, Colleen.

(Music.)

SONIA DARA: All right, listeners. We're wrapping up this episode in the Diversity & Tech Lounge on the Expo floor here at Microsoft Ignite. There's an awesome exhibit here, including a board that asks, "What's your diversity superpower?" So, as an attendee, you're encouraged to pick up a button that best represents who you are at your core.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: You can choose from identity qualifiers like builder, befriender, risk taker, transformer, proud parent, leader, mentor, inspirer, team player, and more.

SONIA DARA: Yeah. There were a lot. I was definitely conflicted, but at the end, I picked Ringleader, because at least here at Microsoft Ignite, the role I've been playing has definitely felt like a ringleader to get my team to come together and pull their demos together, and their content. So, it's been fun. A little like herding cats, but its' been fun. (Laughter.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: You're doing a little bit of wrangling, for sure.

SONIA DARA: Wrangling. It's been fun.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And I picked Thinker because I am dedicating my brain to the cause of inclusion. (Laughter.)

SONIA DARA: (Laughter.) Nice. I remember you were thinking about picking the Thinker button, and I was like, "This is pretty appropriate."

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: When I'm spending too much time staring at eth board, I knew that I needed to pick Thinker.

SONIA DARA: Yup. And special shout out to Community Lead Shona Chee. She did a great job activating the Diversity in Tech program. It was awesome to connect with her onsite. I'm glad she even had the time to meet with us. (Laughter.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And I'm so energized after meeting Claudia Galván. Just like accessibility and diversity, she told us that it's critical to consider internationalization as you're building out a new company, or a new product. I really appreciated hearing more about her journey.

SONIA DARA: All right, listeners. Colleen and I are going to head into the lounge here and do a bit of networking, but as always, please remember to rate, review, and subscribe to the show. You can find us on Apple Podcast, Google Play, Spotify, or wherever you listen to podcasts.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Our website is WiBT.com, and if you have any feedback or questions, please don't hesitate to e-mail us at wibt@microsoft.com, or Tweet us @microsoftwomen.

SONIA DARA: All right, listeners. Your mission for this episode, our very special 30th episode, of course if you choose to accept it, is inspired by a very cool presentation that we just came from before we kicked off this recording. It was a session called Boost Productivity and Fuel Innovation with an Inclusive Culture and Built-In Accessibility. Microsoft's Chief Accessibility Officer, Jenny Lay-Flurrie, gave the talk and promoted some great videos for getting up to speed on accessibility. Check out the snappy how-to videos at youtube.com/msftenable.

All right, I heard there is some Zen pod somewhere. Can we please go check this out before I go back to booth duty? (Laughter.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah, absolutely. The ZenSpace pods are awesome. Let's get out of here.

(Music.)

END